THE BLOG OF CAFE DISSENSUS MAGAZINE – WE DISSENT

My Conscience Does Not Allow Me to Celebrate the Ayodhya Verdict

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Photo: India Tribune

By **Abhay Kumar**

What if the Ram temple were demolished on December 6, 1992, instead of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya? Do you think the Supreme Court judgement would have been the same?

Do you think the demolished structure would have been given to the party that was involved in razing it to the ground or supporting its demolition? These questions are unlikely to be raised in debates and TV shows.

Would you not share the apprehension that the mainstream Indian media, the opposition parties and civil society members lack courage to go against the majoritarian frenzy?

The so-called secular and liberal forces have also disappointed us. They, too, do not want to appear "unpopular" and "insensitive" to the so-called "astha" (belief) of the majority Hindu community.

In a long-awaited verdict on November 9, the Supreme Court allowed the Hindus to build a Ram Temple on the disputed site in Ayodhya. Muslims, another party to the dispute, were asked to build a mosques at another place in Ayodhya.

The Hindutva forces have argued that the Babri Masjid, built in 16th century, stood at the exact place of the demolished Ram temple. In their fabricated history, "the Muslim invaders" demolished the temple to build the mosque. The Muslims as well the eminent historians have denied such allegations.

Abandoned by the secular parties, the minority Muslim community is perhaps most vulnerable today. They are increasingly being told to appear "tolerant", "friendly" to the majority Hindus, "loyal" to the country and become "rooted in Indian (read Brahminical) culture."

Perceiving a possible threat to their security, the Muslim minority is trying to keep a smile on their face even if they feel hurt and let down by the apex court of the country.

For example, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, following the SC ruling, is giving contradictory statements. The Board says that they respect the judgement, yet they feel disappointed with it. The Board, which is under huge pressure, is trying to keep "quiet".

Unlike the minority community, the majority community is celebrating the judgement. The celebration includes chanting and writing 'Jai Sri Ram' on social media. "If temple was not built in Ayodhya where it would be built!" argues one of them. The extremists among them say the time has come to solve the controversy of Kashi and Mathura as well. While the so-called liberals, among them, deny use of coercion in this process, saying that there is nothing wrong in building the temple after the Supreme Court has upheld the position of the Hindus.

Note how the position of the majoritarian forces is being justified by invoking the ruling of the apex court of the country. However, one should not forget that till recently the Hindutva forces were saying that the question of building a temple is a matter of "faith".

Even if the majority of the majority Hindu community are celebrating the Ram Temple Babri Masjid judgment by the Supreme Court, my conscience does allow me to celebrate it.

My conscience does not allow me to forget the gross injustice done in the broad-day light on December 6, 1992.

How could we forget that thousands of fanatic Hindu mobs were mobilised to demolish a centuries-old religious place of the minority community?

How could we forget that the Ram Temple mobilisation sparked off violence and riots, taking the lives of 2000 people?

How could we forget innocent people were injured, displaced and killed in the name of building a temple at a place where no historical evidence can suggest that it had existed there? How could we forget this tragedy?

My conscience, let me say it again, does not allow me to celebrate a judgement that appears to "honour" the so-called majoritarian sentiment. The judgement that does not show courage to challenge the brute power of a majoritarian government cannot appeal to my conscience.

Irrespective of what the mainstream media and the ruling elite say, I think that December 6 was one of the darkest days in the Indian history. On that day, not only the dome of the mosque was razed to the ground but also the pillars of secularism and democracy were broken.

Justice, therefore, cannot ignore the questions of majoritarian tyranny, violation of law and order and the Constitution and mindless murder and violence. But the judgment today hurried to please the majoritarian sentiments constructed and maintained by the Hindutva forces. The so-called bench comprising several judges made a historical blunder to paint a false picture of "India (read Hindus) being a tolerant and secular".

Would the judgement bring peace in society and put an end to communal politics? I doubt.

I wish I were proven wrong. But I doubt if communal conflicts are going be a thing of the past in the wake of the judgment. I do not think the majoritarian forces are going to be contented with winning the Ram Temple and Babri Masjid case.

I am afraid the judgement of the day is likely to boost the morale of communal forces to take laws in their hands. If this happens, the attitude of the Indian state would become more aggressive and hostile towards the minorities.

I am afraid the Ayodhya judgment may encourage the majoritarian forces to make a claim to other religious places of the minority community.

I know my views are against the majoritarian frenzy. At the time of writing this note I am sitting at bonfire. People around me are greeting me with 'Jai Sri Ram'. I also received a message last night to my WhatsApp number in which I was alleged to be "a certain local friend" of Babur who would "start his long journey back home to Samarkand", following the verdict.

Contrary to all these allegations and the frenzied mood of the Hindu India, I want to register my dissent. I know my statement does not have much impact today but I am confident that history and posterity would understand the pain of my heart.

Bio:

Abhay Kumar has recently submitted his PhD at Centre of Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. A regular contributor to newspapers and web portals, Kumar has been working on the broad theme of the Indian Muslims and Social Justice. His other writings are available at abhaykumar.org (http://abhaykumar.org/). You may write to him at debatingissues@gmail.com (mailto:debatingissues@gmail.com)

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